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Editors fear intelligence bill

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This is the second part of an interview with Ellen Ray (R) and William Schaap (S), two of the three co-editors of CovertAction Information Bulletin, target of Congressional legislation aimed at criminalizing the disclosure (when revealed from public documents) of the identities of CIA covert operatives and officers.

Q: How would the law affect progressive groups abroad that use your information?

R: They won't get our information.

S: We wouldn't be able to publish the information. Also the bill has extraterritorial effect as far as Americans living overseas. They wouldn't be able to do these kinds of exposures even living overseas. If they were in a country where there was an extradition treaty, they could be extradited.

Q: Was the CIA able to push this bill through Congress because of what happened in Jamaica (where the CIA Station Chief's house allegedly was shot at)?

S: Oh, absolutely. Nobody thought it would even come up this year. For three years in a row a couple of the real rightwingers had introduced roughly similar legislation. And it never got anywhere, it never even got out of committee. It's one of the reasons we think the Jamaica incident was a phony, because it was used by the CIA to whip up this hysteria to get this thing moving like crazy, to such an extent that the Congressional committees aren't even deliberating on these things — they're having rushed meetings with everybody standing and yelling, 'Get something fast, we don't care what it is!', ending up with what we think is one of the most unconstitutional laws.

Q: Why do you think the Jamaica incident was a phony?

S: First of all the concept of his (Richard Kinsman) having been named (as CIA Station Chief in Jamaica) just a day or two before

is untrue. We had named him nine months earlier in the magazine (issue number 6). Nothing happened to him. Second, his family was not home. Third, there's a question whether he was even home. Fourth, a maid sleeping in the back said she heard nothing and slept all night. Fifth, the story about bullets whistling through the child's bedroom, aside from the fact that the child was thousands of miles away on vacation — weren't even true. And there were some bullet marks in the wall of the garage adjoining the house...

R: And the so-called grenade was a little hole in the ground...

S: And this thing was supposed to happen early in the morning and he never called the police. Ultimately, later the following morning neighbors called the police.

R: He called the opposition newspaper, the CIA newspaper, the *Gleaner* — that's another indication that he wasn't even at home when it happened. One would assume that if all this happened, that he would have called the police or someone immediately. The incident allegedly happened at 2:30 in the morning, and he didn't notify the *Gleaner* until 8:30 or 9:30 the following morning.

S: There's probably no way of knowing for sure, but it just looks funny.

R: Another interesting thing is that the U.S. press did not send anyone at all down to investigate the alleged attack. They just took the word of the *Gleaner*.

S: The stories that came out had several not just inaccuracies but absolute lies in them because nobody investigated. They all talked about the housing having been bombed, whereas as we said there was a little hole in the ground, 30 yards away from the house, and no grenade fragments. There was a story in an American paper saying 'miraculously his young daughter escaped injury.' Well, she was away on vacation in the United States. The stories were bizarre, they just laid it on so thick and heavy.

Q: Why do you focus on the CIA? Exposing covert action is an endless task. Do you see any end in sight?

R: We focus on the CIA because no other single agency or operation has killed as many people around the world as the CIA has. When you add up all the deaths... over half a million, I believe (the CIA was) directly responsible.

S: Nobody else, no other American agency or any other agency is responsible quantitatively or qualitatively for the same amount of destruction as the CIA. When you think about Indonesia, Iran, Guatemala, and Chile, and endless other cases. There certainly doesn't seem to be an end in sight, because they're not going to stop, the dirty tricks. They usually say, when something gets exposed, 'We stopped doing that,' but you then find out two or three years later that always at the exact moment they were saying we stopped doing it, they were still doing it. They change their names sometimes, or they move to another country, but they keep on doing it everywhere.

Q: How effective do you think you have been against the CIA?

R: I think the very fact that the CIA calls us their Number One Enemy — I don't think that's true at all — but I believe we must be affecting them. We're three people, doing this... if there were three hundred doing this, even though the CIA probably has 30-50 thousand employees, and many many more when you count their agents, I think we could bring them to their knees.

Q: Even though you haven't been exposing CIA agents in "deep cover," that still bothers the CIA?

S: Rarely, when we get information or a journalist has a story for us, we would do that, but it's very, very difficult. But it hurts them precisely because their major mission is recruiting agents to, in effect be traitors to their own countries, and to do their dirty tricks for them. And their major vehicle

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for doing that is the people under diplomatic cover.

R: By and large, their deep cover people are not officers, and the people who really head the operations are the ones who work out of the embassies because then they'd have diplomatic immunity, so if they do get caught they'll be sent home without anything happening to them... and they're really the top guys. I mean the deep cover people do probably the really rotten things, but they're given the orders by the people *we* name.

Q: What have you learned about the CIA? Is it possible to stop what they're doing?

S: I think it's possible to have some real impact on what they're doing. I think in areas where there have been major exposures of their operations as well as their personnel, it has an impact, Jamaica being a good example. The Kinsman shooting incident deflected attention from what *really* was significant in Jamaica — which is that there was a major CIA destabilization plot going on, and that exposure helped. It was a part of many people's effort to alert the Jamaican people to it, and it had some real effect... you never know whether exposing an operation or an agent or whatever might have helped prevent something terrible from happening that might otherwise have happened.

Q: Do you find this a lonely struggle? How do you keep on going?

S: Well, within the United States and certainly within Washington, it's somewhat lonely to the extent that — not many people, even liberals, are willing to identify themselves with what we do, even though a lot of them privately are our friends and say 'we couldn't do what you're doing, but we like what you're doing.' Where we're not lonely at all is around the world where we just know thousands of people in dozens of countries who deeply appreciate what we do. And that's part of what keeps us going. There's a certain moral underpinning to what we do, which is basically that we think that the concept of interfering in the affairs of other countries is immoral and that's what we're fighting to try and stop the United States in terms of interfering in other countries. And the people of other countries appreciate that.

Q: How can progressive people help the magazine?

S: Subscribing is one way. Writing to us (at: PO Box 50272, Washington, D.C. 20004) is another. We try to correspond with people all over the world, both our helping them when we can with information we can find out, and their helping us with information they can find out. In terms of the naming names kind of thing, it helps for us to know about the movements of all these people. People around the world send us the diplomatic lists their countries publish, and newspaper clippings about U.S. embassy personnel.

(First part of this interview is not ~~yet~~ available)